DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 056 EA 018 918

AUTHOR	Jensen, Mary Cihak
TITLE	How to Recruit, Select, Induct, & Retain the Very Best Teachers. School Management Digest Series, Number 32.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-86552-091-7
PUB DATE	87
CONTRACT	OERI-R-86-0003
NOTE	64p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403 ($5.50 prepaid; quantity discounts; on billed orders, postage and handling will be added: $2.00 domestic, $3.00 foreign).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Role; Beginning Teachers; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Employer Employee Relationship; *Employment Practices; Evaluation Methods; Personnel Policy; School Districts; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Employment; Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Orientation; *Teacher Persistence; Teacher Qualifications; *Teacher Recruitment; *Teacher Selection
IDENTIFIERS	Policy Implementation

ABSTRACT

The recruitment, selection, induction, and retention of capable teachers are interrelated processes involving schools' personnel, policies, and organization. This report explores issues surrounding these processes and discusses methods to improve districts' programs. Part I, "Recruiting Teachers," describes the competition for capable teachers, argues for vigorous recruitment efforts, and offers recommendations for improving recruitment. "Selecting Teachers," part 2, considers that the most capable candidates may not be the first hired. The section investigates this phenomenon and presents guidelines for districts to reverse this trend. Decisions should be based on multiple measures, because teaching requires proficiency in interrelated fields. Support for beginning teachers is advocated in part 3, "Inducting Teachers." The first section addresses attrition among new teachers, industrial induction models, beginning teachers' needs, and the relationship between induction and competency. The second section examines three commonly used induction structures. Recommendations suggest ways to meet needs of new teachers and their schools. Part 4, "Retaining Teachers," begins with the proposition that conditions that attract good teachers often retain them--competitive wages, meaningful work, professional working conditions, and growth opportunities. Within each category, this part explores factors causing attrition and retention. Recommendations are offered for districts determined to retain capable teachers. A conclusion and a two-page bibliography complete the report. (CJH)

ED279056

HOW TO RECRUIT, SELECT, INDUCT, & RETAIN THE VERY BEST TEACHERS

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EA 018 918

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
College of Education · University of Oregon · Eugene, Oregon

International Standard Book Number: 0-86552-091-7
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-83241
ERIC/CEM School Management Digest Series, Number 32
ERIC/CEM Accession Number: EA 018 918

Printed in the United States of America, 1987

ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
University of Oregon
1787 Agate Street
Eugene OR 97403
(503) 686-5043

Design: University Publications, University of Oregon

The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education under contract no. OERI-R-86-0003. Points of view or opinions do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of ERIC, OERI, or the Department of Education. No federal funds were used in the printing of this publication.

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HOW TO

RECRUIT, SELECT, INDUCT, & RETAIN

THE VERY BEST TEACHERS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD vii

PREFACE ix

INTRODUCTION 1

RECRUITING TEACHERS 5

- Opportunity or Peril? 5
- Competition for Candidates 6
- Examples of Aggressive Recruiting 7
- Incentives to Attract the Best 9
- Recommendations for Improving Recruitment 10

SELECTING TEACHERS 13

- Are the Best Hired? 13
  - Complexity of the Teaching Function
  - Insufficient Attention to Hiring
  - Inadequate Selection Techniques
- The Need for Multiple Measures 16
  - General Selection Procedures
  - The Interview
  - General Cognitive Ability
  - Academic Achievement
  - Work Sample Measures
- Recommendations for Improving Selection 26

INDUCTING TEACHERS 29

- Support for the Beginning Teacher Is Necessary 29
  - The Experience of Industry
  - The New Teacher in the School Culture
  - Needs of the New Teacher
  - National Interest in the Beginning Teacher
  - Induction Programs and Teacher Competency
- Structures of Induction 36
  - Mentor or Support Teachers
  - Supervision and Training
  - Support Groups
  - Cooperation between Institutions
- Recommendations for Improving Induction 43

RETAINING TEACHERS 47

- Competitive Salaries 47
- Prestige and Meaningful Work 48
- Professional Working Conditions 49
- Opportunity for Growth 52
- Recommendations for Improving Retention 52

CONCLUSION 55

BIBLIOGRAPHY 56

THE VERY BEST TEACHERS

FOREWORD

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management is pleased to add this report to the School Management Digest, a series designed to offer educational leaders essential information on a wide range of critical concerns in education.

At a time when decisions in education must be made on the basis of increasingly complex information, the Digest provides school administrators with concise, readable analyses of the most important trends in schools today. The goal of this analysis is improvement of educational practice. Each Digest points up the practical implications of major research findings so that its readers might better grasp and apply knowledge useful for the operation of the schools.

In this Digest, author Mary Cihak Jensen combines practical experience, thorough research, and skillful writing to address critical school personnel issues. Jensen received a B.A. in English from St. Joseph's College, Orange, California; an M.Ed. in counseling and guidance and an M.A. in educational psychology from Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles; and a Ph.D. from the University of Oregon. Her doctoral studies emphasized educational psychology and school management. Her dissertation, *Employment and Success as a Teacher: An Analysis of the Path from Measures of Academic Achievement and Teacher Education*, proposed a theory of relationships among teachers' characteristics, their performance in teacher education, their likelihood of obtaining employment, and their success in the classroom.

Jensen's twenty years of experience in schools have been unusually varied, including elementary and secondary school teaching, school counseling and psychology, grants writing and management, school administration, and direction of staff development. Similarly, her earlier publications reflect her wide range of interests. Jensen is the coauthor of *Games Children Should Play: Sequential Lessons for Teaching Communication Skills*, published by Scott-Foresman, Inc. She has authored five Oregon School Study Council Bulletins on topics ranging from school-business partnerships to parenting education to personnel selection and induction issues.

Philip K. Piele
Professor and Director

PREFACE

We've all heard the story before. The goal-oriented traveller consults a map, embarks on the freeway forming a nearly straight line between origin and destination, journeys a day unveeringly, and then—somehow—her eyes wander. The destination, if she is ever to reach it, becomes secondary to more alluring side-trips.

This volume results from a detour I took on the way to a dissertation. Given access to an unusual collection of admissions and program data on a group of University of Oregon teacher education graduates, I plotted a straightforward longitudinal assessment of their success as teachers. In the process of studying teacher competence issues, my eyes wandered to an assertion made by W. Timothy Weaver: school districts do not necessarily hire the most capable graduates of teacher education programs.

The side-trip became a journey in itself, one question leading to another. Whom do school districts prefer to hire? What selection techniques might be responsible for their choices? If talented teachers are hired, how can districts encourage their persistence? The dissertation expanded and this volume began.

A considerable portion of the chapters on selection and induction appeared originally in two Oregon School Study Council Bulletins, *Recruiting and Selecting the Most Capable Teachers* (May 1986) and *Induction Programs Support New Teachers and Strengthen Their Schools* (September 1986). Interviews conducted in the Northwest for these volumes provided a number of practical examples used in this text. In addition, teachers in Northern California were interviewed for the chapter on teacher retention.

I wish to thank Stuart C. Smith, director of publications for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management and editor of the Oregon School Study Council, for his help in planning this work. He and his assistant, Linda Lumsden, are also to be thanked for their able editing.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of any educational program is largely determined by the competence and performance of its teachers. The strength of a nation's teacher corps is shaped by those who major in education, those who are hired, and those who stay in the profession. Thus, at every stage in the preparation, selection, and retention of teachers, the issue of quality surfaces.

Yet the recommendations for reform are often simplistic. Proposals customarily address only the stage of teachers' preparation, suggesting that teacher training institutions should raise their admission and program standards. These institutions, say the reformers, should guarantee their graduates' basic skills competencies, mastery of subject area, and pedagogical prowess.

Although improving the quality of the preservice training of prospective teachers is of obvious importance, it is only a partial solution. Donald Medley and his colleagues offer a model that distinguishes between the responsibilities of teacher education institutions and those of school districts. According to this model, the job of training institutions is to certify teachers' *competence*, defined by Medley and his coauthors as the repertoire of abilities and knowledge believed to be important for success in the profession. Competence is what Thomas Sergiovanni calls the "can do" of the teacher.

More specifically, the role of teacher education institutions is twofold:

1. to recruit and admit individuals who are likely to successfully complete training
2. to grant credentials to those who acquire sufficient skills to practice the profession competently

In contrast to "can do" or competence is "will do" or *performance*—what the teacher actually does on the job. How well a teacher performs depends in part on competence, in part on motivation and personal characteristics, and in part on the school environment. Within any profession, some individuals exceed their predicted competence and others fail to realize their potential.

Primary responsibility for monitoring and assisting teachers' performance falls to school districts. Raising the professionalism of

teachers will not be accomplished merely by upgrading standards of admission and programs at teacher training institutions. School districts enhance the performance of their teachers in three ways:

1. recruiting and selecting the most capable graduates of training institutions
2. utilizing effective methods of induction and supervision of new staff members
3. incorporating structures and attitudes that encourage the retention of talented teachers

After prospective teachers are trained and a minimal level of competency verified, school districts must recruit and select the best candidates. If districts, for whatever reason, fail to hire the most capable candidates, even the best efforts of teacher training institutions will be for naught.

In addition to the selection process, school districts affect the performance of new teachers through structures of induction and supervision. Carefully designed programs for beginning teachers should be based on the premise that teacher education institutions prepare the student to learn from experience.

Finally, school districts ensure a highly qualified teaching staff when they establish structures and policies that heighten capable teachers' professionalism. Once talented teachers are recruited to a district, will the quality and management style of that district encourage them to stay?

This School Management Digest discusses ways in which school districts can improve educational programs by implementing effective recruitment, selection, induction, and retention policies. When used appropriately, these processes have the power to verify teachers' competence and to enhance their performance in the classroom.

RECRUIT, SELECT, INDUCT, & RETAIN

HOW TO

RECRUIT, SELECT, INDUCT, & RETAIN

THE VERY BEST TEACHERS

RECRUITING TEACHERS

*R*ecruiting and selecting teachers may be the most important task school administrators perform. The quality of any school district depends more upon the quality of its staff than upon any other factor. Each time a teacher is hired, the local school and its district have an opportunity to improve instructional programs. This chapter describes the shortage of teachers, argues for vigorous recruitment efforts, and offers recommendations for attracting the most capable teachers.

Opportunity or Peril?

Over 1.3 million teachers will be hired in the United States between 1986 and 1992. These openings present a "window of opportunity" for school districts, according to Edwin M. Bridges. Such a vast influx of new teachers offers districts a chance to rapidly improve educational programs.

Yet, like many other opportunities, this one is fraught with perils as well as possibilities. As Bridges says, "Incompetent teachers inhibit student learning, consume administrators' time, and tarnish the reputations of colleagues." Estimating that 5 percent of teachers currently employed in United States public schools could be considered incompetent, Bridges warns that the hiring of inadequate teachers will continue unless more effective recruitment and selection procedures are devised. He recommends concentrating district resources, however scarce they may be, on the selection, evaluation, and development of probationary teachers.

Mistakes made in personnel selection are costly and have long-term effects; developing sound personnel practices can save districts money and increase efficiency. If districts are to fill the predicted vacancies with the most capable teachers, they must reform their recruitment and selection processes.

Competition for Candidates

The teacher marketplace is increasingly competitive. Districts that are able to offer employees higher salaries and pleasant working and living conditions may attract a large pool of qualified applicants. However, districts that are unable to offer these incentives—especially those in urban and isolated rural areas—already find it difficult to attract competent teachers. In most regions of the country, filling vacancies in math, science, foreign language, and special education has been particularly difficult.

The very reforms that are heralded as answers to education's problems ironically have also increased the demand for teachers. Reduced class sizes, stiffer graduation requirements, and new early education classes all require expanded teaching staffs. Increasing professional opportunities for women have also had an impact. Until fairly recently, teaching was one of the few careers pursued by women. Today, however, women have many more professional options, and they may weigh opportunities in education against those in other fields. As a result of these and other factors, the National Center for Education Statistics predicts a shortage of 18,000 teachers by 1987 and 278,000 teachers by 1991 (quoted by William Goldstein).

Not everyone agrees that these alarming projections of teacher shortage are accurate. Some administrators believe the teacher shortage will be restricted to inner-city schools or schools in isolated rural areas. They may find it difficult to believe positions in other areas will also fail to attract candidates. Yet even if some districts are able to attract numerous candidates to an advertised position, this does not guarantee that a capable teacher will be hired.

Competition between districts in the teacher marketplace has qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions. Schools that seek qualified personnel are hampered in their search by national problems of inadequate academic standards and teacher preparation. One state's experience is unfortunate but not singular: 45 percent of the teacher trainees taking the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Exam failed. Other states report lowering the passing level of examinations to have an adequate number of teacher candidates.

Historically, college students who major in education have been, as a group, less academically able than most other college students. Gary Sykes cites studies as early as 1928 that reported standardized

test scores were lower for students majoring in education than for those pursuing any other college major. Between 1951 and 1953, education majors scored lowest among the men who took the Selective Service Qualifying Test, an examination of both verbal and quantitative ability. Graduate Record Examination scores of education majors declined significantly between 1970 and 1982.

There is some evidence that this trend may now be reversing. The Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of prospective teachers are beginning to rise faster than the national average.

Academic and intellectual skills are only one set of prerequisites for the capable teacher. As Phillip Schlechty explains, personal qualities are equally important:

> What is needed in schools are persons who are tender of heart and extraordinarily sensitive to the needs of students. Such persons are not ordinary in any society. Perhaps it is time we consider extraordinary means of selecting them. Caring for a persistently misbehaving child, understanding that a child's insults should not be taken personally, and believing that every child can learn are no more "normal" in our society than is the disciplined response of a defense attorney who is defending a mass murderer or the disciplined aesthetic attitude that permits a physician to lance a festering wound without becoming ill. Being a member of a fully developed human service occupation requires one to make abnormal (disciplined and controlled) responses to difficult circumstances.

Examples of Aggressive Recruiting

With a national applicant pool that contains academically and socially unqualified individuals, districts need strategies that will increase their odds of finding the qualified candidates. Districts with severe shortages are often the first to use creative options. Personnel directors in major urban areas have both issued emergency credentials to suitable but untrained candidates and recruited internationally for hard-to-fill positions. Still others take a long-term approach, recruiting for potential teachers among high school students and establishing scholarships for teacher education.

Districts increase their odds of hiring the "best" when they seek a large number of applicants. The need to recruit aggressively is even more imperative when districts seek teachers for inner-city or rural settings, when they need instructors in high-demand subject

or specialization areas, and when they face rising enrollment. In such cases, personnel officers no longer wait for applicants to come to them: they seek candidates on college campuses and at regional recruitment conventions. In some states, both inner-city and rural districts attract applicants by promising benefits ranging from bonuses to relocation services to reductions in rent. Educators may learn from the example of industrial leaders who recruit continually, believing that ongoing recruitment increases the organization's productivity.

Industry's active recruitment on college campuses offers a model that has been adopted by some school districts. One Northwest school personnel officer visits teacher training institutions annually to obtain a list of outstanding student teachers. He invites them to visit the district, observe its programs, and participate in "getting acquainted" interviews. Another personnel officer starts even earlier: she recruits high-achieving education majors for student teaching positions in her district.

For a field often considered noncompetitive, education has recently seen increased competition for personnel. Districts that seek talented, experienced teachers are more likely to "go out after them." It is no longer uncommon for personnel officers to recruit teachers employed by neighboring districts. Teachers with a reputation for excellent performance are invited to interviews in which as much time is spent selling the potential employer as learning about the candidate. Whether a district recruits student teachers, education majors, or experienced instructors, continued contact with the most promising individuals increases the strength of their relationship to the district.

Administrators of isolated rural schools face unique challenges in recruitment. Potential applicants may know more about rural schools' disadvantages than about the advantages they frequently offer—smaller classes, greater participation in decision-making, community support. One superintendent of a rural school district sees recruitment as a combination of search, salesmanship, and followup. Her search is enhanced by the relationships she maintains with university placement officers and with student teacher supervisors. "They know me and they know my school," she says. They probably also know by now that she wants and gets top candidates. Seven years ago, she had six applicants for a teaching position; after energetic recruitment at the universities, she now considers up to sixty applicants for each position.

Her efforts don't stop there: she considers the interview an opportunity to sell her school to valued contenders. She thanks them for their time, offers a tour of the school, coffee or tea, and her finest salesmanship. Many exceptional teachers recruited through this process say her district was the only one that revealed so much about its programs during the interview, the only district that spent time encouraging applicants' interest.

When this carefully designed selection process is used, more than one candidate typically emerges as exceptional. To demonstrate her interest in top candidates, the superintendent includes followup in the process:

> Sometimes the top three candidates are so close it's nearly a flip of the coin. I don't want to lose the other two. I follow them for some time, sending Christmas cards, for instance, letting them know we are still interested in them. If a single element in their background discouraged me about them, I tell them. If they have a weak preparation in mathematics, for example, I recommend additional courses.

Energy and candor have brought a constant stream of candidates to this rural school. In this, as in other successful recruitment campaigns, teachers are attracted to the personality of both the recruiter and the district.

Incentives to Attract the Best

Undeniably, a district's sincere interest and honest communication maintain a pool of loyal applicants. Yet even these consistent recruitment efforts may not be enough to fill teaching positions in high-demand areas. As shortages increase, the most capable candidates can choose from among multiple job offers. To counter competition, administrators, school board members, and community leaders can join forces to provide incentives designed to attract the best. The variety of incentives used in school districts testifies to the creativity of educators and their communities.

Recognizing that salaries influence applicants' job choices, districts committed to hiring capable teachers aim first to increase wages and benefits for beginning teachers. In some areas of the United States, school districts entice experienced teachers by increasing the number of years of experience that can be applied on existing

salary schedules. Financial bonuses have been offered for teachers in highest demand—special education, math, and science instructors. Local businesses cooperate with other districts to offer candidates free interview trips, reduced household moving costs, relocation services, subsidized rent, low-interest loans, guaranteed summer employment, or discounts at restaurants. In many cases, the emotional support of the community that accompanies the financial incentives is as important as the incentives themselves.

One district fashions its incentives to specifically match its goal of attracting academically and socially capable applicants. The personnel director and school board, reasoning that gifted teachers value professional growth, offer graduate school tuition, accelerated sabbaticals, and extensive staff development opportunities.

Beyond monetary considerations, candidates seek attractive working and living conditions. The reputations of both the school district and the community influence teachers in their employment decisions. Schools that offer a professional environment—manageable class size, supportive inservice, capable leadership, staff collegiality and cohesion—attract and keep highly qualified teachers. Districts that provide supportive yet stimulating work environments and communities that welcome the educator will find teachers when others will not.

Recommendations for Improving Recruitment

1. **Develop policies and budgets.** As a beginning, school boards need to adopt written policies that declare the district's commitment to hiring the most qualified teachers. They need also to authorize budgets that allow creative, aggressive recruitment.

2. **Select recruiters carefully.** Since a candidate's first impression of the district is often based on his or her perception of the recruiter, the recruiter must be an individual capable of projecting the district's interest in, support of, and fairness toward its employees. The recruiter also must be able to represent the community as a whole as well as the district.

3. **Recruit throughout the year.** Too many recruitment efforts are hampered by the mentality that there is a recruitment "season." Because continuous recruitment requires more extensive record-keeping, some districts track candidates and their qualifications

through computer database systems. In some districts, retired administrators are hired as part-time consultants who review the applications and verify qualifications and references. After this initial screening, the applications of promising candidates are sent to school-site administrators.

4. **Be prepared to "sell" the district and area.** Successful recruiters use a variety of channels—brochures, displays at conventions, and interviews—to publicize the attractiveness of their schools and community. Incentives offered by the community demonstrate respect and support of the accomplished professional. These indicators of support may be as important as the incentives themselves.

5. **Combine efforts to recruit teachers.** Recruitment efforts consume finances and energies. Small districts can centralize recruitment efforts and ensure that qualified candidates are attracted to their area. Regional or statewide clearinghouses for applicants match potential teachers with openings in districts. Regional recruitment fairs, until recently considered a technique of the past, are increasingly popular solutions to personnel directors' dilemmas. The lost art of recruitment appears about to be reborn.

6. **Publicize your intention to obtain qualified staff.** It is time to turn around a self-fulfilling prophecy. William Goldstein contends that the bleak statistics of inadequately prepared teacher candidates have made it less likely teaching will be chosen as a career by the brightest students. A district's heightened expectations—determination to find the most capable—can help to reverse that trend. Some of the best and brightest can be attracted both to teaching and to those districts that seek the most capable.

SELECTING TEACHERS

Recruitment is only a first step toward the hiring of capable teachers. From among the applicants, districts must choose the best person to fill the vacancy. Making that choice is not easy: administrators tell of tedious decision-making and, worse, of serious consequences of mistakes. This chapter considers the possibility that the most capable candidates for teaching positions may not be the first hired. It offers explanations for this phenomenon and guidelines districts may follow as they seek to reverse this trend.

Are the Best Hired?

Current studies suggest that school districts may not be allocating adequate time, energy, and money to the selection of teachers. If teacher selection practices are as flawed as some recent studies suggest, school districts may not be able to benefit from renewed efforts to upgrade teacher training.

With the amount of public attention drawn to the quality of teacher training institutions, one would think that teacher education graduates who have the "best" academic qualifications would have a distinct advantage in securing a teaching position. But could it be that despite the concern about the qualifications of student teachers and the performance of training institutions, school districts themselves do not seek the most academically talented graduates? Could school districts be contributing to the problems of teachers' competency by not preferring the most promising candidates?

Recent studies support a hypothesis proposed by W. Timothy Weaver: methods used to select and place teachers do not result in more academically competent teachers being hired. In Weaver's study, subjects who had lower test scores on four out of five measures of academic competence in mathematics, reading, and vocabulary

were more likely to be teaching than those who had higher test scores. Granted, the design of his study did not allow him to distinguish between those who did and those who did not actively seek teaching positions. In research designed to allow that discrimination, Nancy Perry found that the "best" candidates as measured by their grade point average (GPA), evaluation of their student teaching, and professional recommendations were not favored in hiring. Neither were the "worst" favored. Therefore, Perry concluded that academic criteria apparently do not significantly affect the job-hunting experience of graduates.

One would expect teacher selection to be most effective during periods of teacher surplus. Yet if the experience of the Dallas (Texas) School District is typical, a surplus of candidates is no guarantee that districts will hire the most academically qualified. Perry reports that in 1977—a "surplus" year in Dallas—55 percent of newly hired teachers in the district failed a basic skills test whereas 36 percent of the total number of applicants failed. Deficiencies in the hiring process seemed to have actually favored those applicants who failed over those who earned passing scores.

In a study by Beverly Browne and Richard Rankin, superior cognitive skills did not predict employment as a teacher. No significant relation was found between scores on the National Teacher Examination and success in finding a job. In fact, being rated as "bright" by a college supervising teacher was negatively related to employment. Calling for further research into hiring processes, Browne and Rankin concluded that personality factors may be more important than knowledge in determining whether or not an applicant is selected.

This author's research has shown no significant relation between measures of candidates' ability and offers of employment. Neither has it shown any significant relation between measures of achievement within teacher education and subsequent employment, although in the same study the only significant predictor of success as a teacher was performance in student teaching. One possible explanation for these findings is that employers in school districts simply have not considered measures of the characteristics and achievement of potential teachers.

Three conditions make the hiring of qualified teachers a challenge: complexity of the teaching function, insufficient attention to hiring, and inadequate selection techniques.

Complexity of the Teaching Function

Teaching is a complex task. Teachers judge and organize curriculum, orchestrate simultaneous learning activities, diagnose group and individual needs, participate in school decision-making, advise parents, represent the school in the local community, and enhance students' academic and emotional health. Each individual teaching position in turn demands specific skills requiring a blend of specialization and generalization, independence and cooperation. The act of teaching is, in fact, so complex that it defies attempts to describe it fully or to measure it accurately.

Because teaching is not susceptible to precise description and measurement, the selection of capable teachers is particularly difficult. When teachers are expected to perform such a wide variety of functions, how does a personnel director or school principal assess so many abilities? Cognitive skills alone do not make a teacher. As J. C. Sisk says, it is personal and social characteristics that make a teacher out of a scholar.

The task of improving selection is complicated by the fact that research on the prediction of teaching performance fails to provide any definite answers. At least since the turn of the century, educators have asked how they might predict who will become an effective teacher. Researchers accepting that challenge have investigated the relationship between what they term successful teaching and a variety of measures—GPA, personality tests, National Teacher Examination scores, self-concept surveys, attitudinal inventories, vocational interest batteries, and academic achievement tests.

The results of such studies have been generally inconsistent, though research employing multivariate analysis rather than correlational studies has the most promise. The multivariate studies demonstrate that combinations of cognitive and personal factors, rather than single measures, may predict success as a teacher. Researchers confirm what personnel directors sense: no one measure or test can assess a candidate's potential as a teacher. One variable cannot accurately predict all the skills and abilities required of teachers.

The situation facing small schools is particularly problemmatic. Teachers in small schools may need a wide range of abilities and certification in more than one area or level. In addition, they may need to adjust to the community—to its expectations, its lifestyle, and its support systems. Since supervision may be remote, often teachers in rural schools must be capable of a high degree of autonomy.

Insufficient Attention to Hiring

Although many superintendents and principals believe that the hiring of teachers is one of their most important functions, they do not allocate a significant amount of time or money to this effort. Most of the nation's school districts do not have policies for the selection of employees and most administrators lack training in systems that would increase their chances of choosing the best candidate.

In addition, the selection of teachers has received relatively little attention from researchers. Compared with other areas of educational research, studies of hiring practices are few, validation of procedures is minimal, advice to well-intentioned personnel directors is scarce.

Inadequate Selection Techniques

The process by which teachers nationwide are commonly selected may explain in part why the "best" in terms of academic and performance ratings are not necessarily the first to be hired. The consensus of research findings is that in American schools administrators often fail to gather enough information about candidates. Decisions to hire teachers may be based on inadequate selection procedures.

The Need for Multiple Measures

This section presents the strengths and weaknesses of commonly used measures of candidates' potential, such as the interview and basic skills tests. Drawing from the experience of industry, it suggests the use of multiple measures, including direct work samples, critical-incidents tests, live demonstrations, and videotaped presentations.

General Selection Procedures

Typically, moderate or large districts follow one of two general procedures for selecting teachers:

1. **School building administrators, often with members of their staff, screen applicants for vacant positions.** After reviewing information about the applicants and interviewing them, the school recommends final candidates to the district office staff for approval.

The district office staff member responsible for personnel reviews the applicants' files, verifies references, and approves or disapproves of the school's choice.

2. **District personnel officers or teams screen applicants for positions.** After examining all information available about the candidates and perhaps conducting interviews, the personnel officer or selection team recommends five or six candidates to the local school. The five or six candidates are considered to be the best qualified for the vacancy. The local school administrator, often with members of the school staff, names the preferred candidate.

Each procedural option has its proponents. Administrators who favor the second procedure contend that it gives more assurance that the district is complying with equal opportunity regulations in employee selection. Those who argue for the first option believe that local administrators are in a better position to know the qualifications a particular job requires. Districts increasingly report the addition of layers to the selection process: such layers are seen as an insurance policy, a protection of the district's interest in teacher selection.

In one moderately sized district the school principal and his or her selection team review applications on file at the district office, conduct preliminary phone checks of references, interview promising applicants, and refer two or three top candidates to the director of elementary or secondary education. Applicants surviving that level of review are sent to the director of personnel for a third interview. At each level of screening, interviewers use formal rating sheets and rank-order the applicants they see. To avoid biasing the next interviewer, candidates are sent to the next level unranked. At the end of the process, the director of personnel calls the school administrator to compare the district's ranking with the local school's choice. Consensus is valued but veto power is mutual. The procedure takes time, but the district's administrators believe the importance of selection decisions justifies the time allocated to the selection process.

Wherever the selection process begins, both district and school-site personnel are involved in choosing teachers. Since no single test or procedure offers a magic answer to the problem of selecting qualified teachers, training of employers is essential. Many districts use group training sessions for their administrators, leading them to consensus about the characteristics of good teachers and teaching them strategies that will identify those teachers. To the extent that teams are involved in the selection process, members of the teams

need training in goals and strategies.

One form of training occurs when districts validate their employment processes by studying how candidates selected in previous years actually performed in classrooms. If a teacher fails to perform according to the expectations of the district, capable personnel managers review the hiring of that candidate, seeking clues to what went wrong so that improvements can be made.

The Interview

The interview is the most common and influential selection technique used in hiring decisions. Yet the interview, if used incorrectly, is neither valid nor reliable. The average interview may stand little chance of being a representative "slice" of an applicant's life, an accurate measure of a teacher's competence. Typically the interview is unstructured, lasts less than one hour, and is highly influenced by first impressions, appearance, nonverbal behavior, and conversational skills. Untrained interviewers tend to ask unchallenging questions and to use the interview as an opportunity to talk about their own accomplishments or philosophy.

Some studies suggest that interviewers may arrive at their decision to hire or reject an applicant within the first five minutes of the interview. The remainder of the interview is used to find evidence to support the predetermined choice.

Although often maligned, the interview is not without promise. An interview helps employers evaluate a candidate's social and personal characteristics. It taps several areas of social competence that are associated with successful teaching—capacity for leadership, tactfulness in working with others, sensitivity, verbal expressiveness. The reliability of the interview process increases when interviews are structured: when candidates are asked the same questions, they in effect "run the same course." Conducting a thorough job analysis prior to the interview and using a selection team rather than an individual interviewer improves interviews.

Districts can improve interviews by improving the skills of the interviewers. A U.S. Department of Education research report advises districts to select interviewers who have these qualifications:

- alertness to cues
- ability to make fine distinctions, perceive accurately

- ability to make immediate and accurate records
- willingness to use criteria established by the organization
- ability to suppress biases

Successful interviewers believe the interview to be only one of many measures they need to consider. As a single measure, the interview should be structured to gather the specific information it is best at gathering: indicators of social competence, commitment, pragmatic problem-solving skills, thought processes, and elements of subject-matter knowledge. When structuring interview questions that all candidates will be asked, interviewers should avoid questions that can be answered yes or no, questions that suggest answers, or comments that reveal the interviewer's own preferred response. Despite the claims of their publishers, no commercially packaged, structured interview formats have been judged as valid in refereed professional journals. The interviewing team, then, does not have any magic formula available to them in devising its structure.

William Goldstein offers a format and samples of questions designed to draw explicit answers from candidates. Good interviewing, he says, is like good teaching: it moves from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex.

> Interviews should allow the candidate opening familiarity—easy responses, perhaps about themselves—and move quickly to more rugged terrain. Regrettably, many interviews never leave easily traversed meadows for the more challenging mountains of intellectual questioning that stretch the candidate. Opening questions at interviews tend to deal with biographical information and the candidate's aspirations. Such questions have lubrication value; they ease strangers into familiarity. But once a firm footing is in place, such questions should be abandoned quickly.

Goldstein offers examples of questions from that more rugged terrain:

> A third-grade student chronically fails to do assignments in the prescribed manner. Conferences with parents have failed to alter the situation. The principal urges you to "keep trying." Your move.
>
> You give a pretest that shows you that map-reading skills of your fourth- graders are appalling. Describe your course of action in detail.
>
> How would you explain the concepts of inflation, interest rates and national debt to sixth-grade students at a level that they understand?

> Teaching method courses often advocate "conceptual" learning. Just what is a concept and how does one teach it? Give an example from a lesson in history.

A mixture of questions that demand problem-solving and queries that tap subject-matter knowledge allows the candidate to demonstrate his or her thought processes as well as educational background. Despite the rigor of his format, Goldstein reminds interviewers to think like candidates, anticipating their emotions and tensions. Top candidates, he argues, will receive multiple offers: their choice may be based upon how they were treated in interviews.

Attraction to Similarities. The Rocky Hill (Connecticut) Public Schools recognize the danger within the interview system. According to Goldstein, the district publishes a policy on recruitment that reminds its administrators

> it is in the best interest of the school system to conduct interviews of a thorough, searching, open, and frank order. It is the expressed intention of the Board of Education to hire the *best* possible candidate for each position, irrespective of pressures which may operate to favor one candidate over another.

Every district has its selection skeletons, applicants who owe their success as much to their friendship with the assistant superintendent as to their qualifications. Not unlike the industrial workplace, schools are accessible to those with connections, mentors, networks. Choices based primarily on internal connections are often obvious. Choices based on a phenomenon that can be called "matching," however, are more subtle and perhaps more dangerous.

We have said that interviewers often make the decision to hire or reject the candidate within the first five minutes of the interview. That early decision can be biased by what business calls "the old school tie syndrome," the tendency of interviewers to prefer applicants similar to themselves. Donald L. Merritt, studying 500 principals, found they preferred candidates with attitudes similar to their own. The principals were so attracted to persons of like attitudes that attitude congruence between them and the candidates predicted hiring better than did qualifications for the job. Admittedly, shared values and attitudes may contribute to effective working relationships, but the selectors' decisions about candidates were influenced by the proportion of congruent attitudes, not by the relevance of the attitudes to the vacant position. Merritt concluded that the idiosyn-

cratic attitudes of the reviewer may be the basis for selection or rejection of candidates.

A Matching of Quality? Perhaps among schools, too, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Compatibility of attitudes toward education and the school may produce an efficient staff, but to what extent should that compatibility be weighted in employment decisions against the applicants' qualifications? To what extent should an effective school staff seek diversity among its members? Are teacher candidates selected because they in some way match the school's current quality? If so, strong schools get stronger, weak schools weaker.

Most selection procedures will look good on paper. It is relatively easy for school districts to write policies that proclaim fairness and enthrone excellence. But no matter how good the policies appear on paper, a more basic issue overrides the written policy. Members of selection teams must ask themselves in what way their choices may be influenced by an attraction to applicants of similar attitudes or abilities. Those who will judge applicants must consciously examine the competencies needed in the vacant position as well as their own attitudes toward education, their school, and prospective staff members. Members of selection teams must study their faculty's weaknesses, looking for gaps in their talents or perspectives. Filling those gaps can mean hiring an individual who will contrast, perhaps even conflict, with existing skills and norms.

The task is an awesome one: it means appreciating the power of potential group members and yet knowing just how much diversity to embrace. One question should appropriately guide the interview: "Who can get this job done?" The "job" in a professional setting is a dual one: Who can at once best promote student learning and contribute to this professional team?

Overemphasizing compatibility or similarity among teachers can limit students' experiences. Granted, a group of teachers with one philosophy of knowledge, one methodology, may give students a consistent experience from year to year, but they may also limit students' ability to learn from a variety of styles and systems. Larry Cuban, analyzing the historical progress of American education, contends teaching remains substantially the same year after year, despite changes in teacher preservice education. Teachers tend to teach as they were taught, or perhaps as the teacher next door teaches, or as the principal who hired them taught. Diversity in

education begins with the selection process. The critical question in hiring is not "Who will fit in?" but "Who will add to our skills?"

General Cognitive Ability

An increasingly accepted theory in industrial psychology says that employees' general cognitive ability predicts their knowledge of a job and therefore their performance in that job. According to John Hunter, the more complex the job, the more the generalization applies: higher ability workers are faster in cognitive operations on the job, better able to prioritize conflicting rules, better able to adapt old procedures to new situations, and better able to learn quickly as the job changes over time.

The complexity of the teaching function clearly demands high cognitive skills. Teachers must be life-long learners who are able to continually update their base of knowledge, to use new strategies, and to adapt to changing student and community needs.

The question of teachers' cognitive ability is frequently raised in procedures for the dismissal of incompetent teachers. Edwin Bridges reports that in investigations of teachers dismissed for incompetency, supervisors cited lack of skill and ability to perform instructional duties, weak intellectual ability, inadequate knowledge of subject matter, and poor judgment.

Despite the importance of cognitive ability, school district employers may instead seek teachers recommended as enthusiastic, dependable, desirous of working hard, cooperative, and able to benefit from advice, as Robert Mortalani reports. Without denying their importance, one must ask how well those descriptors alone predict an applicant's ability to master the complex tasks of teaching—organization of curriculum, diagnosis of group and individual needs, interaction with parents and community. One must also ask how well "able to benefit from advice" describes the teacher who is supposed to be a central participant in the schools' decision-making process and a responsible professional.

Industrial employment recruiters who visit college campuses typically ask to see only those students who have GPAs above 3.0, who have held a position of leadership in a campus organization, and who have had successful job experience. In short, they look for achievers and leaders. And they assume that GPA is related not only to ability, but also to work habits, determination, and accountability.

Unlike industry, school districts may not be looking for achievers and leaders. Elaine McNally Jarchow reports that when superintendents in one midwestern state responded to this statement, "Candidates with GPAs from 2.5-3.5 are preferred to candidates with GPAs from 3.6-4.0," only 59 percent disagreed. Let us not overstate the case. After they screen teacher candidates for cognitive ability and achievement, employers must appropriately seek signs of commitment, integrity, empathy, energy, and, yes, magic. Looking for the teacher-scholar means shedding some stereotypes, admitting that the English teacher can enhance a child's linguistic prowess as well as his or her self-concept. Seeking academically qualified educators does not mean teachers will be less compassionate, less dedicated. On the contrary, it probably means teachers will be more self-confident and more capable of contributing to the strength of their school community.

Employers in this nation's military, civil service, and industrial settings commonly administer tests intended to measure potential employees' cognitive ability. Most school districts instead use what they consider proxy measures of cognitive ability. Such proxies may include challenging interview questions, GPA, and formal tests. Although none of these potential "stand-ins" for more direct measures of cognitive potential can be considered predictive measures of teaching competence, together they can provide clues about an individual's academic preparation, achievement, and judgment skills.

Academic Achievement

Calculating the effects of GPA and test scores upon teaching performance is a difficult task because of what statisticians term the restricted range of study. Because the grades and scores of individuals who are admitted to teacher education programs and certificated as teachers tend to be homogeneous, it is difficult to demonstrate the strength of relationship between academic performance and teaching performance. Nonetheless, a growing number of studies on the prediction of teaching performance are finding a relationship between academic achievement and teaching success. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, districts have increasingly sought transcripts as evidence of an applicant's academic achievement. Even districts that traditionally discounted the importance of grades now

publicize their desire for good students whose achievement is reflected in GPA and test scores.

The trend toward testing teachers represents one attempt to improve the competency of educators and to placate the concern of the public. Some states require passing scores on basic skills tests before admission to teachers' training; others mandate basic skills or pedagogical examinations prior to certification. In twelve states, teachers are tested both before entry into training institutions and before certification. Cut-off scores distinguishing passing from failing are usually determined by the states and may reflect little more than basic literacy. The tests may aid in screening out candidates with failing scores, but they are not intended as predictive instruments that would help districts select candidates with superior skills. Although the tests partially satisfy the demand for higher standards, they function more as symbolic actions than as total answers to the teacher competency issue.

One may wish that a single score on a single test could predict teacher competency, but research does not bear this out. J.V. Mitchell was speaking about the National Teacher Examination when he warned about dangers in interpreting its scores: "This type of quantitative information is so handy, seemingly concrete and beguiling that it will receive more emphasis than its validity deserves and abuses damaging to careers and human beings will result." Particularly when tests are mandated by state legislatures, they can be quickly conceived and inadequately field-tested and validated. The tests receive criticism on two other grounds: (1) a disproportionate number of minorities fail and (2) legislatures may adopt a test without thorough inspection of what it measures and how it relates to classroom teaching or the state's teacher education curriculum.

More and more frequently, districts are supplementing the state-required tests with their own exercises, usually tests of written expression. Potential teachers are asked to write solutions to hypothetical dilemmas or to define elements of their educational philosophy. Personnel officers rate these efforts for logical expression of thought as well as for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Like other pencil-and-paper tests, district-designed examinations are limited in the scope of talent they measure.

This is not to say that basic skills tests or pedagogical examinations have no value in the screening of potential teachers. They may not be predictors of teaching performance but they may establish a

baseline of skill levels essential in any professional role. Like GPA, the tests offer one more piece in the puzzle of teacher selection.

Work Sample Measures

Placing the right teacher in the right school at the right time demands that employers seek a wide range of information about each applicant. However, even a thick file of scores and references for a candidate may not accurately measure the individual's teaching skills.

Industry commonly uses work sample measures, tests designed to show more precisely the exact skills necessary for a specific job. After a thorough job analysis determines the skills needed in the position, tests are devised to measure them. For example, an individual applying for a position as a typist may take a typing test. It is not common among school districts to use work sample tests, but perhaps it should be. Candidates for teaching positions could be asked for live or videotaped demonstrations of their work as instructors. Alternatively, interviewers could request a written lesson plan designed to teach a specified concept.

Critical-incidents tests are a second form of work sample assessment. In this interview technique, candidates are presented with a specific problem situation and asked for solutions. Prior to the interviews, the selection team reviews the questions and formulates a scale of sample responses, rating them as high, medium, or low quality. Each interviewer independently rates the quality of applicants' responses by analogy to the sample responses.

This author's research suggests that student teaching might also be considered a work sample. The ratings of cooperating or master teachers were found to be the single best predictors of teaching performance three to six years after the completion of teacher education. This research also offers support for the inclusion of masterful teachers on selection teams. Those teachers who are themselves experts can make powerful contributions to the team's assessment of work sample tests.

Broadening somewhat the definition of work sample, leading districts are now considering the probationary years before granting of tenure to be samples of future teaching performance. Candidates in these districts are informed that their actual selection process lasts through those years.

Certainly, selection strategies are becoming at once more thorough and more sophisticated. There is nonetheless no panacea for those who seek to choose the best teacher.

Recommendations for Improving Selection

1. **Develop written policies for selection.** Just as the district needs written commitment to the recruitment of capable teachers, it also needs policies that establish guidelines of fairness to candidates, require intensive job analysis prior to hiring, and encourage validation of locally devised procedures.

2. **Treat candidates with fairness and respect.** Federal and state legislation mandates minimum standards of fairness to candidates. The legal standards are truly minimal; in addition, districts are ethically bound to maintain honest and supportive communication with each applicant. A district's recruitment and selection campaigns are marred when its employers lack integrity. Districts justly inherit poor reputations when candidates are subjected to interviews whose conclusions are preordained, when applications are treated with disinterest and disrespect.

3. **Train those who select teachers.** Those who select teachers need training in job analysis, legal guidelines, and multiple assessment techniques. Without training, their choices may be unduly influenced by factors such as attitude congruence, first impressions, and personal biases. Training of interviewers should include audio and video records for their own and peer review.

4. **Involve more people in the decision.** Asking final candidates to proceed through a series of assessments and interviews with district personnel can be viewed as an insurance policy in selection. The use of selection teams can increase the reliability of interviews by combining the judgments of several individuals. To minimize the undue influence of any one selection team member, use written and independent evaluations before seeking consensus on decisions.

Using more than one interviewer does not, however, guarantee freedom from bias. Members of selection teams must ask themselves in what way even their collective choices may be influenced by an attraction to applicants of similar attitudes or quality. Hiring a new teacher is an opportunity to fill gaps in a faculty's talents as well as a chance to find a colleague who will work well with the existing

team. Group processes can allow a school staff to examine consciously its needs and preferences, to form insights about its choices, and to develop a structure in which to use those insights.

5. **Consider a variety of information about candidates.** A combination of cognitive, academic, and personal characteristics predicts success as a teacher. No one technique offers a panacea in teacher selection. Research supports only multiple, thorough assessment. Districts can screen candidates initially on ability and achievement measures—GPA, student teaching performance, scores on basic skills and verbal ability tests, recommendations verified by telephone. After this initial process designed to identify the most academically qualified, districts can assess personal skills through structured interviews, seeking signs of commitment, integrity, empathy, and energy.

Even a combination of interviews, tests, and transcripts may not give a district a clear idea of an individual's teaching skills. Districts are encouraged to experiment with more direct samples of teaching behavior such as live or videotaped demonstrations of teaching, sample unit plans, or lessons designed to meet objectives specified by the interviewers.

6. **Learn from successes and mistakes: validate your process.** Schedule an annual examination of the products of the district's hiring process. How well have the district's new teachers performed in the classroom? What are their areas of strength and weakness? How did or did not the hiring process predict those strengths and weaknesses?

Techniques of selection are best validated at the local level. Districts large enough to support a program evaluation department can use the resources of that office. Regional or statewide consultants can help smaller districts evaluate their choices and procedures. The cost spent in perfecting selection techniques is minimal compared to the financial and emotional cost of dealing with an incompetent teacher.

INDUCTING TEACHERS

*M*ounting evidence indicates that the most capable teachers may not remain in the profession. To encourage new teachers and to enhance their productivity in the classroom, many school districts have developed supportive programs for beginning teachers known as induction programs. These districts may be motivated by any number of research findings and expressed national concerns: attrition of teachers, needs of beginning teachers, and desire to upgrade teacher competency levels.

The structures of induction programs, whether in educational or corporate settings, vary widely, but all share common purposes as stated by Phillip Schlechty:

1. to develop in new members of an occupation those skills, forms of knowledge, attitudes, and values necessary to carry out their occupational roles
2. to create conditions that cause new members to internalize the norms of the occupation to the point that the primary means of social control is self-control

Programs offered by school districts to teachers in the probationary or induction phase of their careers can meet the needs of the new professionals as well as the needs of the districts. The first section of this chapter considers the need for supporting the beginning teacher. It addresses the attrition of new teachers, the industrial models of induction, the needs of the beginning teacher, and the relationship between induction and teacher competency. The second section examines three commonly used structures for inducting teachers. Finally, a list of recommendations suggests ways to meet the needs of new teachers and their schools.

Support for the Beginning Teacher Is Necessary

The quality of the teacher work force is influenced not only by

who enters teaching, but by who stays in teaching. Nationwide, say Phillip Schlechty and Victor Vance, about 15 percent of first-year teachers leave the profession; 10 percent leave in both the second and third years; 5 to 7 percent leave in each of the fourth, fifth, and sixth years. Nearly 50 percent, then, have left teaching after six years. But the most dramatic attrition rate occurs during the probationary period, the first three years of teaching.

The attrition figures are distressing enough when they are coupled with the forecasts of a national shortage of teachers. The figures are even more distressing when they are linked to another common suggestion of research: the most qualified new teachers may be the first to leave. Teachers in the higher ability ranges appear to leave teaching at a disproportionately greater rate than do those in the lower ability ranges. The higher the score on the National Teacher Examination, the less likely the teacher is to be teaching seven years after beginning. Schlechty and Vance found that among teachers who have served seven or fewer years, almost two-thirds of those who had scored in the top decile in the NTE had left, whereas only one-third of those scoring in the bottom decile had left. Attrition among teachers is costly to both individuals and their institutions.

The Experience of Industry

Voluntary turnover among newcomers has increased in many organizations, not just schools. Industrial researchers have detected an increasing rate of attrition among college graduates in the first eighteen months of their first career jobs. Newcomers may suffer from unrealistic and unmet expectations, isolation, and the organization's "sink-or-swim" philosophy. According to Meryl Louis, programs designed to initiate new employees often fail to take into account the difficulties the employee experiences during the transition to a new job, a new setting, and a new status.

Newcomers into any organization are changing, moving away from familiar places and roles, and letting go of former lifestyles and relationships. At the same time newcomers must let go of earlier roles and roots, they must begin to understand the culture of their new setting. Each organization, Louis points out, has a personality of sorts, often referred to as an organizational culture. The culture includes "how we do things here" and "what matters here"—the often unspoken norms, attitudes, and expectations of the group.

"Learning the ropes" in the organization proceeds in stages, according to Robert Merton. In stage one, recruits anticipate the kinds of experiences they will have in the organization they are about to enter. They build expectations about how their life will be once they are inside the organization. Such expectations may be unrealistic. In stage two, beginning workers test their expectations against reality. "Reality shock," surprise, or disillusionment results if too great a discrepancy exists between expectations and reality.

Stage three—membership in the institution— is achieved when newcomers are given responsibilities and are entrusted with privileged information, included in informal networks, and sought out for advice and consultation. Members who reach this stage are those who have successfully encountered surprises and been able to make sense of the unexplained norms and customs of the organization.

Such sense-making need not be left merely to chance and the newcomer's persistence. Louis advocates three ways in which organizations can speed the induction process:

1. Fostering links between newcomers and their insider peers, perhaps through buddy systems or mentor programs.
2. Providing timely formal and informal feedback from supervisors about their performance. Newcomers commonly experience stress related to not knowing how well they are performing. Supervision allows them to focus their self-appraisal efforts.
3. Facilitating newcomers' understanding of their own entry experience. Newcomers should know why surprises are likely, disillusionment is possible, and meaning must be made of seemingly random events. Most important, newcomers must be led to realize that they are not alone in their dilemma, but that they may appropriately seek information and help they need from the organization.

The New Teacher in the School Culture

The new teacher experiences the dilemma of any neophyte in any organization. Like the newcomer in industry, the new teacher leaves a former lifestyle:

> Let's face it. The new teacher who opens the classroom on Monday may have graduated last Friday. That teacher may have moved to a new area and lived alone for the first time. All of a sudden, he or she is expected to be an adult and a professional, and an exceptionally competent one at that.

John Mahaffy is director of the Center for Professional Development at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon. In an interview with this writer, he pointed out that many new teachers find their first years traumatic. Structures within schools tend to intensify the new teachers' problems: they often work in isolation, rarely observing each other or getting feedback from their peers. Without established structures of peer communication and support, the new teacher may wonder how to get help without admitting he or she is having trouble. Mahaffy is aware that school administrators may not realize the problems new teachers face:

> Sometimes principals will tell me they wish they had all beginning teachers because they are so competent and energetic. When they say that, I have to wonder how much those beginning teachers are hiding and how hard they are working to seem so competent. Teaching is an incredibly complex job and it takes time to learn it.

Teaching is undeniably "an incredibly complex job," but there is often little time to learn it. In most industrial settings, the orientation of the newcomer includes an apprenticeship period during which the new job may be experienced in a simple-to-complex learning sequence. Dan Lortie contends that this gradual assimilation into the job is not possible for the teacher:

> Fully responsible for the instruction of his students from his first working day, the beginning teacher performs the same tasks as the twenty-five year veteran. Tasks are not added sequentially to allow for gradual increase in skill and knowledge; the beginner learns while performing the full complement of teaching duties.

In fact, the job first-year teachers face may be more difficult than that experienced staff members encounter. When Elizabeth Clewett summarized research on the beginning teacher, she found that the difficulties of the new teacher tend to be exacerbated by organizational structures. Often new teachers are assigned larger groups of students, more difficult students, and more duties of both an instructional and noninstructional nature. The teaching assignment itself is also frequently unrelated to the new teacher's subject matter expertise and experience in teacher training.

Lack of supervision of the beginning teacher can contribute to the problems of the beginner as well to the difficulties of his or her district. School principals are frequently reluctant to monitor the

performance of new teachers during the first months of the school year, preferring instead to let new teachers "try their wings" without fear of evaluation. While this sentiment may spring from well intentioned motives, it can have unexpected negative consequences. Unaided, new teachers tend to experience difficulties, particularly in discipline and classroom management, that increase as the school year progresses. Without supervision and feedback, they may repeat costly errors.

In many if not most schools, supervision of the new teacher is rare, limited to infrequent and brief observations of classroom performance. Ironically, supervisors tend to rate beginners' competence more highly than do the beginners themselves. Perhaps afraid of discouraging new teachers, administrators may miss opportunities to encourage them.

Typically, new teachers tend to socialize themselves into the profession. They learn both the job of the teacher and the culture of the school by observing staff members rather than by communicating directly with them. A double barrier inhibits open communication: the newcomer is reluctant to disclose a lack of knowledge or competence, and experienced teachers do not wish to be seen as meddlers. Through careful observation newcomers may learn some of the techniques their more experienced colleagues have adopted. Beginning teachers report picking up clues from assignments on experienced teachers' chalkboards, papers left at the copy machine, and comments made in the lunchroom. In schools where no structure of peer support exists, the newcomer may suffer from lack of legitimate access to the expertise of his or her colleagues.

This is not to say that new teachers are not influenced by their colleagues. Gary Griffin believes that they are in fact more influenced by their past teachers and by people in their new school setting than they are by their recent training. The influence of experienced teachers is usually exerted in informal ways, often through role modeling. Still, according to Griffin, the lack of formal support structures and legitimate access to those role models can leave the beginner feeling abandoned in the face of the complex task of teaching. Feeling abandoned, new teachers may revert to procedures that are familiar to them at a deeper level: they may teach as they were taught, rather than as they were taught to teach. They have, after all, been students themselves for at least sixteen years; the techniques of teaching they have observed during those years may exert more

influence upon their behavior as new teachers than does a year or less of teacher education.

Needs of the New Teacher

Much of our nation's research on the needs of the beginning teacher is "unseasoned," merely in its own beginning stages. An additional complication arises from the fact that many studies use a small number of subjects: drawing conclusions and generalizations from a small sample can be misleading.

One point of uncertainty in this early stage of research is whether the first year of teaching can be termed *traumatic*. Apparently some, but not all, beginning teachers experience their initial year of teaching as traumatic. In a study at the University of Austin (by Leslie Huling-Austin and colleagues), for example, new teachers reported varying degrees of distress during their first year; their discomfort came primarily from the difficulty of their teaching assignment.

Even if one does not call the first year of teaching traumatic, Clewitt's review of the current research shows beginning teachers commonly face similar problems:

1. Classroom management and discipline
2. Student motivation
3. Adjustment to the physical demands of teaching
4. Managing instructional tasks (organizing work, individualizing assessment and assignments, instruction, locating materials and resources)
5. Sacrificing leisure time
6. Managing noninstructional demands of the position (establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues; managing extracurricular assignments; enlisting assistance of other staff members)

Susan Roper and her colleagues at Southern Oregon State College emphasize the noninstructional challenges beginning teachers face. New teachers, they argue, need to learn to work with other adults, to acquire a more realistic view of the teaching profession, and to be given a more complete theoretical framework from which to work. Too often students enter teacher education believing they will work almost exclusively with children. Typically, teacher education focuses on preparing teacher candidates for instructional tasks and work with children. Rarely does the student teacher learn how to conduct parent conferences, work as a member of a teaching team,

seek support in new settings, or deal with the frustration of not reaching every student.

National Interest in the Beginning Teacher

In 1981, Nancy Isaacson studied the support offered University of Oregon graduates during their first year as teachers. Isaacson defined *support* as the means by which individuals reduce the uncertainties and make sense of the complexities involved in beginning to teach. The first-year teachers in her research reported receiving little or no formal or informal support. In schools where both informal and formal support were available, the first-year teachers tended to find the informal support more valuable. Informal support was usually offered by experienced colleagues and included providing role models, sharing experiences, and suggesting specific strategies and materials. Like their counterparts in industry, experienced colleagues especially assisted newcomers when they provided information that helped the new teacher make sense of the school's political dynamics, assumptions, and unspoken norms.

The new teachers reported positive feelings about three types of formal institutional support:

1. Provision for legitimate, recognized, and timely access to at least one trusted colleague—formal assignment to a mentor
2. Formal supervision, periodic observations and specific feedback
3. Formalized opportunities to meet regularly with groups of their colleagues

In the years since the Isaacson study and similar research, beginning teachers have received attention at federal, state, and local levels. Despite the embryonic nature of the research itself, state departments of education, school districts, and even state legislatures have responded with programs. Several states, including Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, and South Carolina, have mandated attention to the new teacher. Particularly in areas where teachers are certified on an emergency basis without student teaching experience, the induction programs have a sense of urgency about them.

Induction Programs and Teacher Competency

State legislatures, teacher training institutions, and school districts are all frequently accused of responding slowly to the suggestions

of research. Why then has there been such immediate attention to one area of educational research? Sympathy for the beginning teacher probably motivates some activity. An equally strong motivation arises from the fact that, in meeting those teachers' needs, districts meet two major needs of their own.

First, districts that have invested time and money to attract good teachers protect their investment with programs that keep good teachers. The attrition rate of new, promising teachers is not just a problem to personnel directors; it is a concern to everyone who desires to fashion effective schools. Attrition of the talented is a loss to students, schools, and the profession.

Second, the desire to upgrade the competency of their teaching staffs motivates districts to pay attention to the beginning teacher. Districts that take the granting of tenure seriously consider the individual's first three years a true probationary period. In selecting teachers, districts are hampered by the absence of clear indicators that would predict a candidate's performance as a teacher. The probationary period, however, can serve as a sample of the person's potential, a demonstration of skills over a long period. Increased supervision and feedback during the first years direct the new teacher's efforts toward competency in the profession.

A superintendent of a large suburban school district believes that induction programs take advantage of the fact that new teachers are "coachable"; that is, they capitalize on the positive attitude new teachers bring to the district. The increased interaction with and observation of new teachers allows the district to distinguish between newcomers who grow stronger with support and those who cannot or do not become more accomplished. The true probationary period allows the district to make decisions about continuing an investment in new teachers who fail to grow even with assistance. Increasingly, districts view induction programs as a chance to support new teachers and strengthen their institutions.

Alternative models of inducting, including their advantages and shortcomings, are discussed in the following section.

Structures of Induction

The most effective induction efforts seem to be those rooted in teacher selection and professional development programs. Induction begins with recruitment when clear, rigorous selection criteria allow chosen teachers to feel set apart. Acceptance by a team of adminis-

trators and peers further sets the stage for entry into the organization. Personnel directors who clarify their induction strategies to potential teachers report that the most capable candidates are attracted to programs of strong support and high expectations.

Nationwide, induction programs vary according to their degree of formal structure and their ability to balance the needs of the beginning teacher and the employing district. Their one commonality is that they all promote a high level of interaction among the beginning teacher, administrators, and colleagues. Because most of the programs are relatively new, few are described in professional literature and even fewer have been subjected to evaluation. This section presents three structures of induction: use of mentor teachers, increased supervision and training, and support groups for newcomers. These three structures parallel those recommended in industry. Districts focusing upon the needs of new teachers may use one or all of the structures.

Mentor or Support Teachers

School staffs vary in their acceptance of new members. In the Isaacson study, new teachers had different experiences:

> Oh, they were very supportive, very warm...there were only fifteen faculty members, and it was a really friendly group.
>
> I was really overwhelmed when I first met the staff, because nobody had seen each other all summer and they were happy to see each other again. . . . And then there was me—out there. I guess it would have happened to anyone, but it was really hard to deal with.
>
> They aren't very friendly generally, especially because the high school is so big and a lot of them don't really feel comfortable there; I don't feel like that's my home. I just do my own thing, and I don't really feel a part of what is going on.

In a common model, experienced teachers serve as mentors or sponsors, providing the newcomer with friendship and access to a colleague's expertise. From discussing the math curriculum to untangling the social expectations of the staff room, the mentor provides a soundingboard for the newcomer's questions and concerns. In addition to offering informal support, mentor teachers may provide formal classroom observation in a clinical supervision format.

The selection of mentors is critical. Research and common sense

both suggest that a capable teacher who teaches the same subjects at the same grade level using the same instructional style could be most helpful to a new teacher. Beyond this generalization, however, other qualities should be considered.

The mentor needs more than pedagogical skills: he or she must be able to communicate with the newcomer openly and supportively. Ideally, the mentor should be someone who enjoys the chance to learn from the new teacher and from the helping relationship, someone who considers working with a newly trained teacher an opportunity to enhance his or her own skills. Most critically, the mentor teacher is likely to influence more than the new teacher's instructional skills: the mentor can have a powerful influence on the values and attitudes of the new teacher. In the vulnerable transition between student teaching and first-year teaching, newcomers are particularly susceptible to the philosophy and attitude of mentors. To the degree that the new teacher is drowning, he or she will cling to the mentor's discipline strategies, worksheets, and beliefs.

Even an exceptionally talented teacher may not communicate effectively with new colleagues. Rather than assume mentors know how to inform, encourage, reinforce, and solve problems with new teachers, districts that assign such roles need to provide training in their delivery. The lines between consultation and advice-giving, guidance, and judgment may otherwise blur.

Supervision and Training

Another model of induction emphasizes increased supervision and coaching by the site administrator or by the district's staff development department. Several states propose to consider the first year of teaching as an internship, one that features intensive feedback from district supervisors. In industry as well as in schools, newcomers are apparently not best "left alone to learn." In many districts, school-site administrators offer increased supervision for first-year teachers. At its best, early supervision saves new teachers from needless errors, reinforces their strengths, focuses their self-evaluation, and initiates them into a district's continuous professional development program.

Balancing the district's need to assess competency and the new teachers' need for support is not always a simple feat. In an attempt to achieve that balance, a staff development department in one large

suburban district directs the induction program. Regardless of their previous experience, all teachers new to the district will see a member of the staff development team within the first two or three weeks of the school year. Teachers who have had teaching experience but are new to the district are observed and offered individualized staff development plans.

One of the district's staff development specialists assumes responsibility for coaching each beginning teacher. From the start of their relationships with the beginners, coaches work to be as supportive and nonthreatening as possible. Before school opens, they visit with the first-year teachers, focusing on the teachers as well as their performance in the classroom; the staff developers want to know what the new teachers are feeling as well as doing.

Coaching takes a variety of forms. In one option, the staff developer makes an appointment with the beginning teacher to observe classroom performance, then, while observing, writes or tapes what the teacher says. Soon after the lesson, the teacher does the first analysis of the script and the coach gives feedback, pointing out strengths and selecting one area for improvement. Lesson plan strategies from Madeline Hunter's Instructional Theory into Practice (ITIP) program are used as a basis for evaluation.

Coaching may also take the form of demonstration teaching, team teaching, or joint observation of another teacher. The staff developers sometimes literally coach from the sidelines, using preestablished nonverbal cues to guide new teachers through a lesson.

Are the early observations threatening to new teachers? District leaders contend that a newcomer to any organization feels anxiety but that their staff development structure in many ways protects the newcomer from tension by providing predictable support.

In most districts using a staff development coaching format, the routine of classroom observations and conferences is integrated with formal workshops. Topics focus on the typical needs and concerns of first-year teachers:

- providing classroom management and student discipline
- motivating students
- mastering content
- fitting into the school environment
- preparing and organizing work

- locating materials and resources
- establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues
- adjusting to the physical demands of teaching

First-year teachers tend to experience most difficulty in classroom management. One new teacher recalls:

> I left college with some expectations: "I'll teach. Students will learn. They'll behave in order to learn." Instead, I've seen how much preparation goes into managing a classroom so that I can teach and students can learn. Classroom management doesn't seem like much until you have to do it.
>
> I can see now how new teachers who don't learn what's going wrong in their classroom management can get frustrated right out of the profession. Without the help of the staff development program I might never have realized just what was going wrong in my own teaching.
>
> Now I ask myself, "Why were some of my own teachers effective and some not?" I believe now it depended on how well they were able to logically, step-by-step present what it was they wanted me to do.

The work of a staff development department does not replace evaluation by a district's principals. Instead, that work in many ways prepares the new teacher for evaluation. In one district new teachers understand that their initial visit from the staff developers is confidential. Neither the school principal nor the district personnel director learns of its content. Once the beginning teacher and his or her coach develop their year-long goals for observations and conferences, that plan is shared with the school principal. The staff developers also maintain communication with the principals to clarify needs of the beginning teacher and identify ways the administrator may assist the newcomer.

Like the mentor programs, those that offer intensive supervision and training deserve some caution. Coaches or supervisors must be able to maintain collegial, problem-solving relationships with new teachers; they must fight the temptation to impose rigid guidelines for the beginners' teaching. Griffin warns that, while the research on effective teaching has many virtues, several dilemmas are associated with using this research as the central core of induction programs. The dilemmas arise partly out of the body of research itself and partly out of the use to which the research is put:

> We are . . . still on uncertain ground when we require that new teachers demonstrate effective teaching as described in

> correlational research studies . . . . Much of the effective teaching research is situation specific, tied to certain grade levels with certain student populations in specific demographic and social contexts. . . . Programs designed to help new teachers become proficient should include not only the appropriate scientific bases but also knowledge that emerges out of collective understandings of the craft.

One Northwest school district does not espouse any specific training format. Rather than teach one strategy of instruction, such as ITIP, leaders in this district annually form a training team that conducts a "New Teacher Seminar." The team—composed of district administrators and teachers as well as instructors from outside the district—invites interested, experienced teachers to join the seminar. The course is offered free of charge, and participants receive college credit for completing it successfully. In addition to weekly formal sessions, the training format features individualized classroom observations and followup. The seminar is held during the second quarter of the school year; during the first quarter, new teachers participate in informal support sessions and gather their needs into suggestions for the formal seminar. Topics suggested by the new teachers have included questioning strategies, student motivation, communicating high expectations, providing for individual differences, and time management.

Another caution is in order. Training sessions consume time, a valuable commodity for first-year teachers. Districts need to balance new teachers' need for training with their need for planning and personal time. If training programs are to ease the newcomer's transition into teaching, they must deal with the most pressing needs first, be efficiently managed, and offer compensatory or release time to participants.

Support Groups

As in industrial settings, newcomers in schools need to know that disillusionment, dealing with surprises, and sense-making are normal tasks in the first stage of entry into any organization. Districts can encourage that understanding by forming support groups for new teachers.

Such support groups can accomplish another goal: linking training objectives to the needs of participants. Clewitt found that school personnel report offering more orientation and induction services

than beginning teachers report receiving. Why the discrepancy in perceptions? District programs of induction may be largely ceremonial and ritualistic, not addressing the needs newcomers identify as important. More informal district programs are built around those expressed needs.

In one district, during the first nine weeks of each school year teachers new to the district meet once a week with their school's administrators. The weekly meetings acquaint new staff members with district policies, procedures, and values. They also create supportive collegial relationships among the teachers and administrators. Agendas are set by the group: the needs and questions of the new teachers guide the sessions. One teacher describes the mutual support she received from peers:

> Sometimes we'd get together and tell horror stories. Then we'd talk about how we could make our classes better. As a new teacher you say to yourself, "It's just me. Nobody else is having this problem." Then, when everyone else shares what problems they are having, you find out that yours is a common challenge in teaching and that there are ways to solve it.

Cooperation Between Institutions

Who, after all, is responsible for the enhancement of new teachers' skills? Who should bridge the gap between teacher education and first-year teaching? Schlechty contends that the development of adequate induction systems requires a fundamental reorganization of schools' goal structures. "If induction systems are to work, schools will have to embrace teacher education as a goal, just as they now embrace the education of children as a goal."

Other models for induction combine the energies of school and higher education personnel. In this structure, teacher educators work with school district administrators and classroom teachers to ensure that the new teacher's transition from student teaching to full-time teaching is smooth. If professional development is to be truly continuous, it must begin at preservice training and continue through the teacher's career. At each stage, teams of district and site administrators, cooperating teachers, union leaders, and teacher educators join forces to prevent or eliminate gaps in training. Just as district personnel learn from involvement in teacher training, so do college instructors learn from observing their graduates one or two years

after training. Each receives feedback essential to the improved performance of their function.

Recommendations for Improving Induction

The research on the induction of new teachers may be young, but the testimony of school districts argues strongly for the development of such programs. Programs that support beginning teachers are intended to enhance teacher competency, reduce teacher attrition rates, improve instruction, and strengthen the school as an organization. The following recommendations summarize the suggestions of the research and the current experience of school districts:

1. **View induction as part of teacher selection and staff development processes.** To achieve continuity between programs, induction is best seen as the link between recruitment/selection and continuous staff development. The goals and structures of induction programs exert an impact upon a district's selection procedures and staff development programs.

2. **Share research on the beginning teacher with school administrators and faculty.** School administrators, teachers' groups, and school boards may begin simply by paying attention to the needs of new teachers. Becoming aware of common problems newcomers face is a critical first step. During the initial weeks of any school year, the new teacher is likely to be forgotten while schedules are set and reset, classes aligned, texts distributed, faculty sessions held. At the very time when the new teacher's concern may be the highest, the school administrator is the busiest. The administrator who reviews the research on new teachers with his or her faculty sensitizes the staff to the needs of the newcomer and shares the responsibility for orientation and support.

3. **Share research findings on the beginning teacher with the beginners themselves.** Newcomers should understand the nature of the entry experience and learn how to seek information they need. Coming together in support groups will help them to realize that even though they have special needs, this does not mean they are "different" or "incompetent."

4. **Consider multiple models for induction.** No one model or program fits the needs of every school district, much less the needs of every new teacher. Districts can alter the degree of formality, the type of support, the level of staffing, and the choice of instruc-

tional format within induction programs to meet their own needs.

5. **Choose and train coaches, instructors, and mentor teachers carefully.** If the school's induction program includes training, increased supervision, or mentor teachers, the selection of personnel who will carry out these functions is critical. A variety of personal and professional skills are prerequisite to these assignments. It cannot be assumed that exceptional teachers will be exceptional communicators; training of coaches and mentors is necessary.

6. **Protect the assignment of new teachers.** In the past, new teachers have commonly been assigned to larger groups of students, more difficult classes, unpopular committees, multiple preparations, and extracurricular tasks. Many new teachers have found their classrooms less desirable and ill equipped in comparison with other teachers' rooms and materials. Districts that protect the assignment of new teachers ensure that they receive a reduced or favored load, their classrooms are well equipped, and their materials equal those of the veteran staff members.

7. **Provide assistants for new teachers hired late.** Because districts frequently are unable to hire new teachers until enrollment is verified, it is not uncommon for new teachers to receive contracts the day before school opens or even after the opening of school. Conserving the energy of the new teacher for his or her job is a primary concern. Moving furniture, decorating bulletin boards, and assembling materials are tasks paraprofessional assistants can do. District consultants or recently retired teachers can assist the new teacher in the initial organization of the class.

8. **Increase, rather than decrease, supervision of new teachers.** New teachers apparently are not best "left alone to learn." Frequent classroom visits and conferences support the beginners' instructional goals and prevent them from repeating costly errors.

9. **Balance new teachers' need for training with their need for time.** If district training programs are to ease the newcomer's transition into teaching, they must be efficient and supportive rather than merely time- consuming and demanding.

10. **Form partnerships to support new and veteran teachers.** Experienced as well as beginning teachers profit from structures such as peer observation and coaching. If collegial structures are in place within a school, it is more likely beginning teachers will feel comfortable seeking assistance and less likely that they will equate

the seeking of help with loss of status or incompetence. In addition, individual schools are not alone in their concern for new teachers. Neighboring schools, the district office, local teachers' associations, and teacher education institutions share that concern. The combined resources of these groups strengthen a community's new corps of teachers.

Over time, perhaps the most significant contribution of induction programs will be the increased interaction they spawn among professionals in schools. Administrators and experienced teachers who unite to meet the needs of the newcomer develop in that process structures of collegiality and collaboration that will serve schools in other ways.

The following chapter considers a final question: once recruited, selected, and inducted, how may capable teachers be retained in their districts and in the profession?

RETAINING TEACHERS

Districts that commit energy and finances to recruiting, selecting, and inducting capable teachers face yet another challenge—retaining them. Research suggests that teachers in the higher ability ranges are most likely to leave the profession. Moreover, in a time of teacher shortages, even if the best teachers do not leave the profession, they may leave their current schools and districts. As competition for teachers increases, it is likely that neighboring school districts will begin to increase the incentives offered to experienced teachers. Consequently, talented teachers will be able to choose between organizations.

The same conditions that attract good teachers can keep them: competitive wages, prestigious and meaningful work, professional working conditions, and opportunity for growth. In each of these categories, this chapter examines factors that cause the attrition of talented teachers as well as conditions that encourage their retention. Finally, it offers recommendations for school districts determined to keep the best.

Competitive Salaries

Teachers in the higher ability ranges appear to leave teaching in disproportionately greater number than do those in the lower ability ranges. Noting that his state is representative of teacher retention rates nationally—for every 100 beginning teachers, 50 remain after five years—California Superintendent of Schools Bill Honig finds that those who remain are, on the average, less academically capable than those who leave. He attributes this attrition of the most academically capable to both inadequate pay and poor morale.

Researchers William Baugh and Joseph Stone found that, as a group, teachers are at least as responsive as other workers to wage differences between their current and potential positions that would cause them to change jobs.

The most qualified teachers have excelled both in their academic

preparation and in the teaching profession. Because they are capable of life-long learning, they may prepare more easily for new careers. The same personal characteristics that make them exceptional teachers—commitment, energy, enthusiasm— may also motivate them to seek new options.

In a profession that gives financial rewards—minimal at that—only for endurance, superior performance does not lead to increased financial compensation. Low salaries often prevent teachers from living in the same neighborhoods, shopping at the same stores, or taking the same vacations as other professionals. As a result of choosing careers in education, teachers forfeit the financial security enjoyed by other professionals and, in fact, by many other nonprofessionals. In New York City, the entry-level salary for garbage collectors exceeds that of beginning teachers by 15 percent. In one California town, tenured teachers who staffed a district's new school earned less than did the school's construction workers.

A low salary means more than a restricted financial future. Because salary is often correlated with the value of the work performed, poor wages carry an emotional as well as a practical message. "I've seen the home of my son's orthodontist," one exceptional teacher says. "I've seen his cars and I know what colleges his children can attend. What I can't reconcile is how a society values its children's smiles over their education." The issue is undeniably larger than any single school district: when a teacher's lifetime earnings cannot rival a football player's season contract, it is the nation as a whole that must stop and think.

Yet even within a generally grim national picture, some individual school districts manage to allocate a comparatively larger percentage of their income to teachers' salaries. Districts that make this commitment may find teachers interpreting their salaries as symbolic of a community's support for education. Districts that give employees lower salaries or wait for teachers to wrest higher wages through aggressive collective bargaining strategies run the risk of losing capable but disillusioned staff members to more competitive districts. The wage itself is symbolic; so is the manner in which it is given.

Prestige and Meaningful Work

College graduates clearly do not choose teaching because of its financial rewards. In earlier years, potential teachers may have been

attracted to the profession in part because of the prestige it enjoyed. Yet teachers have lost prestige in comparison to other professionals. Asked if they were likely to remain in the profession another five years, teachers in this author's survey responded:

> I am looking for a career that pays well, has respect in the society, and is not used as a scapegoat for the nation's problems.
>
> The lack of public support is driving me out.
>
> The public does not hold teachers in high regard nor value education enough to adequately fund it.
>
> Teaching is just so much giving without getting something in return.

The most capable teachers—those with the ability and motivation to succeed in education or many other professions—may be the most sensitive to loss of prestige and visible community support. When neither wages nor respect motivates their persistence in the profession, what does encourage talented teachers to stay? Teachers frequently report that they are motivated to continue when their work is meaningful: "I stay in teaching for the same reason I came to teaching," one educator explains. "What I do is significant." Other responses are similar:

> Teaching is personally gratifying: I see the light go on in a child's eyes and I know I am responsible for flipping the switch.
>
> I'm making a difference. I'm passionate about teaching; the compliments I get are still enough to help me look past the low amount on my paycheck.

Others find that teaching offers them variety and creative opportunities: "Where else would every day, every hour, be different and challenging?" "This is the challenge I've wanted in a job." Finding their jobs meaningful and creative, capable teachers say they feel accomplished, competent.

Professional Working Conditions

Losing public prestige is difficult enough, but many teachers report poor internal or administrative support for their job. Lack of organizational support can erode the significance or creativity of the teaching role and discourage capable teachers. Linda Darling-Ham-

mond says that higher ability teachers are likely to attribute their discontent to lack of input into decisions, inadequate resources for classrooms, restrictive controls, and inadequate leadership and support by school administrators.

In the second annual Metropolitan Life Poll of the American Teacher, 41 percent of teachers intending to leave the profession cited working conditions as the single most important factor in their decision to leave. These working conditions included the imposition of nonteaching chores, the school's physical environment, paperwork, and overcrowded classes as well as public lack of respect for teachers. Taken individually or in combination, these factors diminish the attractiveness of the teaching function in the minds of the teachers themselves.

The working conditions and bureaucratic restrictions that teachers decry may have origins beyond any individual school or district. Thomas Sergiovanni defines *professionals* as persons assumed to have a body of knowledge that enables them to make informed judgments in response to unique situations and client needs. Working within that definition, the American history of education appears to be a history of the declining professionalism of the teacher. The trend, Sergiovanni says, "is toward greater centralization in deciding what will be taught in schools, when, with what materials, to whom and for how long."

In the 1970s approximately two-thirds of the states enacted policies that attempted to standardize and regulate teaching behavior. Even more states and local school boards are active in this direction in the 1980s. The teacher, according to Sergiovanni, is changing from professional diagnostician to bureaucratic follower of directions. Increasingly, pedagogical decisions are made by laymen—school board members, legislators, judges, special interest groups. The change may result in greater attrition among the true professionals, those who are motivated by a sense of efficacy or control over their job.

Capable teachers seek a sense of control over their work and accomplishments. That sense of control can be diminished by administrative forces within the schools as well as by community and political forces outside the districts. "I changed school districts," one skilled special education instructor said, "because my job was totally out of my control. I never even knew there was a revised district curriculum until they wheeled the new texts into my classroom."

"I don't have to participate in every decision made on my campus," another award-winning instructor explained. "I just want to have professional input when those decisions affect the instruction of my students. I'm not afraid of accountability—I covet it."

Capable teachers seek capable leaders, principals who match their own desire for achievement. A mentor teacher described her decision to change schools: "I sought out a principal who knew instruction and could support my own need for excellence. I found someone with high standards for herself and for me." Another teacher who moved from a neighboring district described her search for a competent leader and achieving peers: "My principal was never in classrooms. That might be fine if you're a poor teacher, but I saw my enthusiasm die in that setting and I knew if I didn't move, I'd lose my love of teaching."

The capable leader of talented teachers may well be someone who knows how to get out of their way. "I work with an exceptional staff," one elementary principal says, "and my job is to remove the barriers to their effectiveness. I run an efficient school, I encourage an environment for learning, I gather community support, and then I applaud those teachers."

Some organizational structures hold out promise for attracting and keeping the most capable teachers. Trends toward collegial decision-making, mentor teaching, and peer supervision are predicated on a view of teaching as a profession. Professions, after all, are characterized by collegial control over essential decisions, extensive peer review, and evolving standards of practice.

How, rather than what, reforms are introduced into schools seems the major issue. The Metropolitan Life Poll in 1984 found teachers enthusiastic about reform and eager to participate in improving classroom instruction. Yet one year later 63 percent of teachers said they had never been consulted about their district's reforms nor did they know any teachers who had. Although teachers do not seek sole responsibility for decision- making, they expect to share responsibility in tasks such as curriculum development and textbook selection.

Perhaps more than other teachers, high-achieving professionals need more professional control over their working environment. If they are hired for their ability, these teachers are not likely to be content with rigid restrictions on that ability nor to put up with a sense of helplessness in the carrying out of their professional function.

Opportunity for Growth

The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's report *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century* contends that the essential resource for improved schools is already within those organizations: determined, intelligent, and capable teachers. Such teachers are stimulated by their own growth as well as by the growth of their students.

One particularly talented elementary teacher described her reasons for staying in the profession. "I'm refining my skills each year, so each year I feel even better about what I'm doing." Learners themselves, the most competent teachers value their own continued education.

Continued education is often a collegial experience. According to the Carnegie report, if teachers are to work collaboratively, taking collective responsibility for student growth, they must have time together to reflect, plan, experiment, and innovate. In addition, exceptional teachers are stimulated by formal staff development, participation in classroom-based research, and opportunities to earn respect and compensation in peer leadership roles.

Recommendations for Improving Retention

Districts that recruit, select, and induct the most talented teachers must also plan to retain them. The following suggestions are derived from research and the experience of school districts:

1. **Consider the emotional as well as the practical messages of wages.** Low salaries are a recurring reason for the attrition of talented teachers. In determining the proportion of the district budget that will be allocated to teacher salaries, realize that the wage as well as the manner in which it is given may be symbolic of community and administrative support of teachers.

2. **Explore methods of increasing compensation to exceptional teachers.** States and districts intent upon retaining talented teachers consider options including merit pay, stipends for services such as mentor teaching and peer coaching, and summer pay for serving on curriculum development or textbook selection committees.

3. **Applaud teachers' accomplishments within the district and community.** Recognition and support for their achievement encour-

age talented teachers.

4. **Provide efficient systems for using teachers' professional judgment.** If schools are to keep top professionals who desire control over their work, they must fashion structures to obtain teachers' input to instructional decisions. Organizational systems such as grade-level meetings, administrative cabinets, quality circles, and topic-centered teams allow participation in the essential decision-making of a school. Unless such structures are organized to use participants' time efficiently, they may have a negative rather than a positive effect on classroom instruction.

5. **Provide adequate material and personnel resources for classrooms.** The most intellectually capable teachers cite inadequate classroom resources as reasons for their disillusionment with the profession. The talented professionals' skills are used appropriately and their creativity is heightened when they have access to new, stimulating classroom texts and materials. Similarly, capable teachers are likely to be capable managers; providing teachers with paraprofessional aides who can assume nonteaching duties will allow teachers to focus upon and perfect the instructional role.

6. **Capable teachers need capable administrators.** Talented teachers may leave schools and districts to follow equally talented leadership. If a district seeks teachers of high academic and cognitive ability, it must also provide administrators of that caliber.

7. **Provide professional and personal development.** Talented teachers seek opportunities for both professional and personal growth through formal and informal sources. Collegial interaction, research grants, classroom observations, courses, and conferences stimulate those whose career choice has been influenced by their own love of learning.

CONCLUSION

The recruitment, selection, induction, and retention of capable teachers are interrelated, interlocking processes. Recruiting and hiring exceptional teachers are clearly only the first steps toward improving educational faculties. School systems must also orchestrate support for beginning teachers, accord more respect to teachers as accomplished professionals, offer professional working conditions, and fashion compensation commensurate with new levels of responsibility. Raising requirements for teacher preparation candidates is not sufficient. Making the teaching profession and the school environment attractive to achievers and leaders is the more significant issue.

The quality of those who apply for teaching positions within a particular school and of those who stay in the positions is related to the quality of the school itself. Cycles, however, can be broken at many points. If a cycle of mediocrity or of destructive competition is to be broken, recruiting and hiring the most competent graduates of teacher training institutions can begin to break that cycle.

Selection teams can strengthen educational programs not by asking which applicants will "fit in" to their present school but by asking: Which applicants are most likely to help forge the best possible school in five or ten years? Which will provide leadership in curricular evaluation? Which will show sound judgment in participative decision-making? Which might someday be considered a "master" or "mentor"?

The cycle can be broken in yet another way. Capable candidates seek effective schools. Schools that offer good working conditions for teachers—environments characterized by cohesion and support, collegiality and professionalism—attract outstanding educators. Better yet, they keep outstanding educators. Organizational vitality and teachers' competency interrelate as mutual cause and effect.

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Raising requirements for teacher preparation programs is an insufficient response to the problem of teacher quality. Hiring achievers and leaders and making the teaching profession and the school environment attractive to them are the more significant issues.

ISBN: 0-86552-091-7